



## **L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science 2023 Young Talents Sub-Saharan Africa Awards: 30 brilliant African women scientists recognized.**

Paris, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The Fondation L'Oréal and UNESCO are proud to reveal the names of the 30 winners of the 14<sup>th</sup> L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Young Talents Sub-Saharan Africa Awards.

Each year, the *L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science* Young Talents Sub-Saharan Africa Awards recognize and support African women scientists for the excellence of their scientific research. For its 14<sup>th</sup> edition, **25 PhD candidates and 5 post-doctoral researchers will be rewarded at the annual ceremony hosted this year in Kasane, Botswana, on 9<sup>th</sup> November.** On this occasion, His Excellency Mr. Mokgweetsi Masisi, President of Botswana, will honour the ceremony with his presence.

### **Women scientists, an opportunity for the African continent and the entire world**

At a time when the empowerment of promising young women scientists has never been more crucial, global efforts in research are still lagging behind. Scientists in Africa represent only 2.5% of the world's researchers<sup>1</sup>. In a world where social, political, economic and environmental crises are escalating every day, harnessing all scientific talents is now vital to ensuring a fairer, more sustainable future for the continent.

For the 14<sup>th</sup> year, the **Fondation L'Oréal and UNESCO seek to reinforce their commitment to promote gender equality in science by rewarding 30 young talented women researchers – an increase of 10 awards compared to previous years.** They have been selected for their scientific excellence among 632 applicants by a jury of 10 members led by Professor Aggrey Ambali, Director of Technical Cooperation and Program Funding at the African Union Development Agency, AUDA-NEPAD. Each one of them is a real source of pride for the 17 countries they represent, including **Cabo Verde and Lesotho, represented for the first time this year. These scientists represent a source of hope for the future of the world, through their careers and relentless determination.**

As bearers of hope and innovative solutions for the African continent, the 30 scientists of the *L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science* 2023 Young Talents Sub-Saharan Africa Awards are investing in multiple fields of research. Using unprecedented approaches, they tackle major challenges to improve the quality of life in Africa and worldwide.

---

<sup>1</sup> [UNESCO Science Report 2021](#)

"The future of Africa is in the hands of its scientists," says Fanta Yadang Sabine Adeline, one of the 2023 Young Talents.

Fanta is not an exception. The thirty 2023 young talents - biochemists, epidemiologists, ecologists, artificial intelligence experts and public health specialists – are all committed to finding long-lasting solutions to Africa's diverse challenges. They are all a real source of inspiration for future generations.

Providing role models for the young generation is fundamental. On the morning of 8<sup>th</sup> November, the Young Talents will engage with the First Lady of Botswana, H.E. Mrs Neo Jane Masisi, and more than 150 school students in an intergenerational conversation and knowledge exchange that will pave the way for a brighter future in science.

### **About the L'Oréal-UNESCO Young Talents Sub-Saharan Africa Programme**

Established in 2000, the national and regional *L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science* Young Talents programs annually provide over 250 grants in more than 110 countries. Their aim is to empower women scientists to pursue their career, and more broadly to promote and highlight the crucial importance of women in science.

*"UNESCO is deeply committed to supporting gender equality in science for the benefit of society and to championing scientific excellence worldwide. During the 25 years of our partnership with the Fondation L'Oréal, we have recognized and rewarded over 4,100 women scientists at different stages of their career for their exceptional contribution to scientific progress. The L'Oréal-UNESCO Young Talents are the very future of science. We look forward to working with them and with our partners to continue reinforcing the pivotal role of women in science for a sustainable, inclusive future for all."* says Lidia Brito, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences at UNESCO."

**The L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Young Talents Sub-Saharan Africa Awards enable its laureates to benefit from financial support to help them conducting their research projects** – grants of €10,000 for PhD candidates and €15,000 for post-doctoral researchers. The 2023 Young Talents' cohort will join a community of more than 200 African researchers who have been supported and honoured since the creation of this regional program in 2010.

To address the many challenges faced by women scientists, particularly related to gender discrimination and stereotypes, or finding a balance between professional and personal life, the program goes beyond funding. The Fondation L'Oréal provides the Young Talents with the opportunity of undertaking a leadership training to foster their personal and professional development.

*"Enabling women scientists to emerge in the public arena and be recognized for the quality of their work requires urgent action. It's everyone's responsibility - institutions, companies and civil society. Neither Africa nor the world can successfully respond to the environmental, societal, health crises of our time by depriving itself of half of the humanity."* says Alexandra Palt, CEO of the Fondation L'Oréal

The 14<sup>th</sup> For Women in Science Young Talents Sub-Saharan Africa Awards ceremony will take place in Kasane, Botswana, on 9<sup>th</sup> November, and will be attended by important stakeholders including the scientific jury and representatives of the Botswanan Government.

### **Winners of the 2023 L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Young Talents - Sub-Saharan Africa**

#### **Southern Africa**

*Bhamini SREEKEESSOON, Ph.D. student in Engineering Sciences and Technology – 'Harnessing tidal energy to power Mauritius' future' – Mauritius*

*Bonolo Bonita PHINIUS, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental sciences – 'Shining a light on pathways to fight hepatitis B in Botswana' – Botswana*

*Constance CHINGWARU, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental sciences – 'Creating biopesticides from native plants to protect maize crops' – Zimbabwe*

*Felicidade NIQUICE, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Promoting occupational health and safety in Mozambique's hospitals' – Mozambique*

*Maria Nelago KANYAMA, Ph.D. student in Formal Sciences – ' Harnessing artificial intelligence to fight water scarcity' – Namibia*

*Mesha MBISANA, Ph.D. student in Physical Sciences – 'Improving food safety to promote better health in Africa'- Botswana*

*Nthabeleng HLAPISI, Ph.D. student in Physical Sciences – 'Developing innovative phototherapies to treat cancer' – Lesotho*

#### **Central Africa**

*Fanta Sabina Adeline YADANG, Post-doctoral fellow in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Exploring medicinal solutions to neurogenerative diseases' – Cameroon*

*Hadidjatou DAIROU, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Harnessing the power of native plants to treat cardiovascular disease' - Cameroon*

*Lydie Kamga MESSADO, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Conserving orchids in the Cameroon rainforests' - Cameroon*

#### **East Africa**

*Cheryl KERAMA, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Exploring how sugar regulation impacts tuberculosis' - Kenya*

Devotha Godfrey NYAMBO, post-doctoral fellow in Engineering Sciences and Technology – 'Leveraging machine learning to prevent infectious diseases in livestock' – United Republic of Tanzania

Esther UWIMAANA, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Towards a vaccine for tuberculosis' – Uganda

Faith NJERU, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Developing novel diagnostics to conserve Kenya's maize crops' – Kenya

Grace UMUTESI, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Promoting women's health through improved HPV vaccination coverage' – Rwanda

Hemen Tesfaye Gelaw, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Fighting antimicrobial resistance in food supply chains' – Ethiopia

Mwende Mbilo, Ph.D. student in Physical Sciences – 'Innovating to improve solar energy solutions in Kenya' – Kenya

Naelijwa Mshanga, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Promoting better nutrition among women and children' – United Republic of Tanzania

### **West Africa**

Aderonke KOREDE, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Exploring the health benefits of natural ingredients' - Nigeria

Bernice Konadu AGYEMAN, Ph.D. student Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Improving drinking water quality in Ghana' – Ghana

Dorcas Atibilla, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Shining a light on mosquito behaviour in the fight against malaria' - Ghana

Emma Edinam KPLOANYI, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Taking strategic action to eliminate hepatitis B and C in Ghana and beyond' - Ghana

Fatou Lo Niang, Ph.D. student in Formal Sciences – 'Leveraging machine learning to help prevent cardiovascular pathologies in Africa' – Senegal

Ini ADINYA, Post-doctoral fellow in Formal Sciences – 'Harnessing mathematics to optimise investments' – Nigeria

Jedidah Jacob AKAWU, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Conserving the plants and pollinators of the Nigerian savannah' – Nigeria

Kafayath Ariounke FABIYI, Ph.D. student in Life and Environmental Sciences – 'Leveraging genomic science to overcome bacterial resistance' – Benin

Mary AMOAKO (born ADJEPONG), Post-doctoral fellow in Life and Environmental Sciences – ‘Exploring how nutrition stands to impact birth deformities’ – Ghana

Pamela Borges, Post-doctoral fellow in Life and Environmental Sciences – ‘Advancing research in breast cancer through gene research’ – Cabo Verde

Rahimat Oyiza YAKUBU, Ph.D. student in Engineering Sciences and Technology – ‘Advancing clean energy in Nigeria’s universities and hospitals’ – Ghana

Temitope ABIOLA, Ph.D. student in Physical Sciences – ‘Leveraging metabolic engineering to improve the efficiency of biodiesel’ – Nigeria

Follow the Fondation L’Oréal  
and the program on Twitter @4WomeninScience  
and @FondationLOreal  
LinkedIn : Fondation L’Oréal et UNESCO  
#FWIS #FondationLoreal #UNESCO

### **About the Fondation L’Oréal**

The Fondation L’Oréal supports and empowers women to shape their future and make a difference in society, focusing on three major areas: scientific research and inclusive beauty and climate action. Since 1998, the L’Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science program has worked to empower more female scientists to overcome barriers to progression and participate in solving the great challenges of our time, for the benefit of all. For 25 years, it has supported more than 4100 women researchers from over 110 countries, rewarding scientific excellence and inspiring younger generations of women to pursue science as a career. Convinced that beauty contributes to the process of rebuilding lives, the Fondation L’Oréal helps vulnerable women to improve their self-esteem through free beauty and wellness treatments. It also enables underprivileged women to gain access to employment with dedicated vocational beauty training. On average, around 16,000 people have access to these free treatments every year and more than 35,000 people have taken part in professional beauty training, since the beginning of the program. Finally, women are affected by persistent gender-based discrimination and inequalities, exacerbated by climate change. While they are on the frontline of the crisis, they remain under-represented in climate decision-making. The Women and Climate program of the Fondation L’Oréal supports, in particular, women who are developing climate action projects addressing the urgent climate crisis and raises awareness of the importance of gender-sensitive climate solutions.

### **About UNESCO**

Since its inception in 1945, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has worked to create the conditions for dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based on respect for common values. UNESCO’s mission is to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, to sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through its unique expertise in education, science, culture, communication and information. The Organization has two global priorities: Africa and gender equality. UNESCO is the only United Nations specialized agency with a specific mandate in the sciences, symbolized by the «S» in its acronym. Through its science-related programs, UNESCO contributes to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, helps developing countries build their scientific and technical capacities and supports Member States in their efforts to develop science policies and scientific programs, as well as effective public policies that integrate local and indigenous knowledge systems. UNESCO promotes scientific research and expertise in developing countries. The Organization leads several intergovernmental programs on the sustainable management of freshwater, ocean and terrestrial resources,

biodiversity conservation and the use of science to address climate change and reduce disaster risk.

## **CONTACTS**

### **CONTACT PRESSE – UNESCO**

Clare O'Hagan : [c.o-hagan@unesco.org](mailto:c.o-hagan@unesco.org)